WORLD CHRONICLE

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PROGRAMME: "WORLD CHRONICLE"

GUEST: Margaret Anstee, Secretary-General
United Nations Eighth World Congress
on the Prevention of Crime and the
Treatment of Offenders

JOURNALISTS: Karen Wald, Pacifica Radio
Mary B. Powers, Reuters
Ondrej Kasina, CTK Press Agency

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SYNOPSIS

Combating International Crime

Margaret Anstee, Secretary-General of the United Nations Eighth World Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, is interviewed in Havana. She speaks of such issues as juvenile delinquency, domestic violence, public corruption, and AIDS and overcrowding in prisons and calls the 46 resolutions which the Congress adopted by consensus a very great step in combating international crime, one of the biggest crises of the next century.

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VOICE From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **WORLD CHRONICLE**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues. Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns and this is **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

Almost everywhere in the world, crime is on the rise affecting young and old, rich and poor. It takes many forms, from white collar fraud, street muggings and drug trafficking to human rights violations and political terrorism. While police and judicial systems struggle with outmoded techniques and shrinking budgets, crime has become very big business, better organized and more sophisticated each year. Clearly only a global effort can hope to produce a response equal to the challenge.

Our programme this time varies slightly from our standard format, taking us on the road to Havana, Cuba, where the U.N. recently held its Eighth World Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

Here now is Steve Whitehouse with an introductory report.

WHITEHOUSE: Havana, Cuba. The United Nations World Crime Congress opened here in the last week of August this year. The two-week Congress takes place every five years.

To the Convention Palace, came some 1,300 delegates and experts from 128 countries. They debated issues ranging from street crime to white collar fraud and organized criminal syndicates. According to a U.N. report, 500 million offenses will be committed worldwide this year. That's 100 million more than ten years ago.

Along with arms and oil, drug trafficking ranks as one of the world's three major international businesses. Concerted action is needed among producer, transit and consumer countries.

But the key to equity and constructive social change begins with efforts by all nations to create more humane and efficient criminal justice systems. Action begins at home. That was the central message of the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

LITTLEJOHNS: Now, let's go to Havana at the close of the Eighth Congress for our interview with Margaret Anstee, Secretary-General of the Congress, with Karen Wald of Pacifica Radio; Mary B. Powers of Reuters; and Ondrej Kasina of the CTK Press Agency of Czechoslovakia.

WALD: Ms. Anstee, thank you for being with us tonight on **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

The crisis in the Middle East has understandably diverted much of the attention of the world's media to that part of the world but some of the participants and observers of this Congress have suggested that perhaps some of the measures that have been adopted at this event could have more far-reaching implications for more of the world's peoples, even than what's

going on in the Persian Gulf. There were five model treaties and a number of resolutions adopted here which, if any of those do you think could have such long, far reaching implications?

ANSTEE: I think that all of the model treaties that have been agreed here and all the 46 resolutions that have been passed, and various other instruments that have been adopted by the Congress, are of great importance in the longer term to humanity because, if I may just precede my answer by saying that as we are here on the threshold of the 21st century, one of the biggest crises facing humanity is the crisis of the escalation of crime and particularly international crime. Perhaps the most important of the five model treaties is the one which deals with international co-operation in criminal matters because this is a very important further link in the chain of international co-operation which is absolutely essential if we are really going to be able to tackle crime as I say on an international basis.

WALD: Were there others that you would highlight? Either of the model treaties, the resolutions? What were some of those agreements?

ANSTEE: Well, there was one on extradition, there was on protection of cultural heritage and so forth but I think the thing that one needs to emphasize is that perhaps that kind of thing sounds rather remote from the concerns of individual people though it could in fact impinge on their lives, and one of the things that was very special about it was that it had such a wide range of instruments that it was dealing with and even guidelines, practical guidelines. It was dealing with matters such as corruption for instance in public administration which is an absolutely key issue. It was dealing with problems of juvenile delinquency: how to prevent juvenile delinquency,

how to deal with juvenile delinquents so that they don't fall back into the trap of crime. It was dealing with domestic violence, it was dealing with matters such as how do you deal with prisoners who have got AIDS who are in prisons. It was dealing with issues such as alternatives to imprisonment because in nearly every country in the world it is a case that the prisons are full to overflowing and this is no longer a solution for many countries and while many people are being imprisoned for, if one can term them as such, relatively small offenses at the same time people who are engaged in the big crimes and the multinational crimes are going free so there has to be a way of increasing the capacity of countries to deal in a priority manner with a whole range of crimes.

WALD: In any event that brings together so many people and countries of such diverse cultural, historical, religious, ideological backgrounds, it's always amazing that any kind of agreement comes out at all, what do you think were the greatest successes in bringing together agreement on resolutions at this Congress and were there any failures?

ANSTEE: I think the fact that we had 46 resolutions adopted by consensus was a very great success. Of course, it didn't just come about in 12 days of discussions. Let me perhaps just underline that we had a very long preparatory process for this conference. It goes back over three years. First of all, we had interregional groups of experts who dealt with all of the topics from the individual subject point of view, then we had their conclusions passed through regional groups of governmental representatives so that the governmental and the regional aspect could be brought to bear on the question. Then it was looked at in the specialized United Nations Committee on Crime Prevention and so forth so if you like, by the time delegations came to this Congress, most of

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them had taken part in one and sometimes in all of these processes so that they knew what the issues were. We had ironed out some of the problems beforehand so this was the culminating point if you like of a long process of negotiation and of finding common ground. I think the only, I don't whether failure is the right word but let me say it's the only thing on which we did not reach agreement, was on the proposal that had been put forward by a certain number of countries for a possible three-year moratorium on the use of the death penalty. That was the only resolution that gave rise to a vote and in the end it was defeated because it needed to have a two-thirds majority and it didn't get the two-thirds majority, but I'm sure it's obvious to everybody who thinks about it for a moment that here we were, dealing with an extremely difficult and delicate issue which arouses a lot of emotions and which is looked at differently in different countries in the world according to their traditions, their cultural backgrounds and indeed it has a lot of religious connotations as well, so I think this is a demonstration that the problem of crime is something where there is a very broad consensus around the world. We're always thinking of the world as being divided into different sections and East/West, North/South but here is something where all of these came together and really found common ground in almost everything.

POWERS: These resolutions that were passed, how does the United Nations plan to actually put them into practice? I guess that's the most difficult thing, is to translate these resolutions into practical programmes and in terms of the resources that are needed to do this work.

ANSTEE: Well, let us look at what we mean by United Nations because the United Nations is not just the Secretariat. The United Nations is the whole body of Member States and the resolutions and the decisions that were reached at this Congress

not only map out the programme of work for the U.N. crime prevention and criminal justice programme but they also lay a lot of obligations on Member States. A lot of this action has to take place at the national level and if we take for instance the question of the model treaties these are just models for treaties which then have to be negotiated on a bilateral basis between different governments so there's an enormous amount of follow-up to be done by governments themselves. Now of course, at the same time, the Secretary-General was asked by the Congress to do a great many things in all of the areas which we are mentioning and you've rightly put your finger on one of the problems which is that resources are very limited because, as is well known, the United Nations has been working on a zero growth budget for many years now and under considerable financial constraints, a cash shortfall, which has made life extremely difficult. In fact, while the requirements made of the Secretariat have been increasing in recent years and indeed, the needs to do more to deal with crime have been increasing, our resources have in fact been decreasing so that there is a problem there which, as I said in my opening statement to the Congress, means that on the one hand we have to try to find resources from other sources, whether it's from the regular budget of the United Nations or from extrabudgetary resources, by which I mean special contributions from governments who regard this work as important. But to the extent that there remains a financial gap then we have to look at priorities and this was rather the keynote directive that I tried to give to the Congress right at the beginning. It gave rise to a great deal of discussion not only in the meetings but also in the corridors but as we all know whatever level you try to decide on priorities especially in a very large group, in this case of 127 countries, it's very difficult for them to agree on what should come first. But we did get one particular decision out of the Congress which I think does constitute an important directive

for our future work and that is that in implementing his part or the Secretariat's part of the follow-up to the Congress, the Secretary-General should give particular attention to those actions of a concrete nature and particularly to provide technical co-operation to developing countries in assisting them in playing their part, because in many countries as we know, political will is very important, without that you can't get anywhere, but in a large number of countries the political will exists but the capacity is just not there.

KASINA: Ms. Anstee, the wall between East and West disappeared. It truly influenced the work of this Congress, this fact, but during this Congress some delegates and some journalists had the feeling that somebody is trying to build a new wall, the wall between North and South. I personally heard some simplifications that the growth of criminality in the South is caused only by a low level of development, isn't this simplification dangerous?

ANSTEE: Let me say first of all that I do very much hope that there is not a new wall being built between North and South because it is my hope that now that the tensions have been slackened between East and West that we really will be able to give more attention, the attention it deserves, to reducing the differences between North and South because without that I think we will not be able to have a peaceful world in which to live. Of course there's no doubt that there is, as this Congress has said, a link between problems of development and the incidence of criminality to the extent that people are driven by economic circumstances to find a way of surviving at all costs. Then obviously, it is very difficult sometimes for them to resist the temptation to fall into criminal ways for subsistence but one of the things that we have said very clearly in the documents that the Secretariat put before the Congress is that criminality is

not simply related to this, that the fact of achieving a certain level of "development" -- I put that in quotes because I'm not quite sure what we mean by development sometimes in this context -- the opportunities and the temptations for crime on a much larger scale are also growing and one of the big dangers before the world is precisely the escalation as I said before of international crime on a large scale and one of the themes of the Congress was also not only the linkage between development and crime but also between organized crime and transnational crime.

WALD: If I may follow up on that, some of the Latin American countries have pointed out that for instance in one of the world's biggest battles against crime which is drug trafficking, that although something like $200 billion is grossed yearly from the drug trade only about $5 billion of that ends up in the underdeveloped countries that produce the coca or the marijuana and yet, they are spending between 9%-14% of their national budgets in fighting crime, or fighting this kind of crime, and the developed countries which are the consumers and which are receiving the benefits of this trade, are only spending about 2%-3%. You were looking for pledges at this Congress from various countries to essentially put their money where their mouth is, how many people came up with pledges? Are you free to say what countries have pledged how much?

ANSTEE: Well, we had a very small response to the request for pledges. We had I think three pledges made, or indications that pledges would be made, from the Federal Republic of Germany, from the USSR and from China and China actually handed me a cheque the other day for $10,000. But maybe I could go back to what you were saying at the beginning because I think these funds were only for our social defence fund in Vienna from which we try to augment the regular budget

resources of the U.N. budget for the purposes of crime prevention and particularly for technical co-operation in developing countries. If we look at the drug scene, and maybe I should correct your figures, nobody for obvious reasons really knows the right figure but figures as big as $500 billion have been cited and of course the answer, even though only a small portion of this goes back to the developing countries, it is of course of enormous importance to their economies. Even though the governments in most cases are fighting drugs and are not a party to this, if they were successful tomorrow and were not supported in other ways with their development then they would really have a very big problem. This is, as I said in my opening speech, I think a very clear indication of what I call this 4-D equation between drugs and debt, development and democracy but it also demonstrates that the drug problem also has to be tackled by reduction of demand which is now I think generally accepted. So money is important but there are other kinds of efforts that are also extremely important if we're really going to make inroads on this situation.

POWERS: I'd like to have you comment on the lack of participation by the United States at this Congress and given the fact that drug trafficking is a major problem in the United States and that the United States is a major contributor to the United Nations?

ANSTEE: As you know, invitations for these congresses go out to all Member States. It's up to each Member State to decide whether it will participate or not and it is not for me to say what the reasons were why the United States did not participate. Within the United Nations we naturally regret it whenever any Member State is unable to participate in a meeting of this importance and particularly when, as in this case as you have pointed out, it is the case with a very

important Member State who has a particular interest in the problems being discussed here and also is a very important, the major contributor, to the United Nations. At the same time, I do not think that one should deduce from this a lack of interest. All the indications that I have is that this does not demonstrate a lack of interest by the United States in the results of this Congress which of course do not finish here. They go to the General Assembly of the United Nations, they will be discussed in the Third Committee and insofar as the issue of drug control, the control of illicit drugs and illicit drug trafficking is concerned, while this was a very important element in this Congress because the linkages with organized crime are so obvious, this is not the major forum of the United Nations for dealing with this issue. I happen to be also not only the Secretary-General of this Congress and responsible for the U.N. programme on crime prevention but I'm also the co-ordinator of all the U.N. drug control related activities and there, of course, we have the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, we have the General Assembly, we have had various special conferences on this in which the United States has participated very fully.

POWERS: So it was perhaps a political decision by the United States, because of the venue of the Congress, that they decided not to participate?

ANSTEE: This was never made clear to me officially. I think that's a question that you have to put to Washington.

KASINA: I return once more to Eastern Europe. After reform some Eastern European countries witnessed substantial growth of criminality, do you think that this is the tax that an unexperienced democracy pays ?

ANSTEE: I'm sorry?

KASINA: Do you think that this is the tax that an unexperienced democracy has to pay?

ANSTEE: More crime? Well, I think experienced democracies also are suffering more crime at the moment. I don't think if I can put it that way that anybody has a monopoly on this particular issue but I think it is certainly true that the more that societies open up and controls are slackened then obviously the opportunities for undesirable elements to indulge in crime become greater. I don't think that's an argument against democracy. I hope it is not.

KASINA: We shall continue.

ANSTEE: I'm glad to hear that. But I think it's a problem that we have always in human life. There is never any perfect solution to anything. Any particular approach, any system has its advantages and disadvantages and one has to weigh up what are the advantages of freedom against the advantages of such tight control that none of these things were allowed to happen. It seems to me that the only answer in such circumstances is to try to build up the defensive mechanisms, control mechanisms certainly to make sure that those who commit criminal acts are caught and brought to justice, but also much more importantly too, there's a much more difficult educative and preventive process to stop the thing from happening in the first place and this also means of course, we come back to something we were talking about earlier, that also means ensuring that people have conditions of life which in one sense, in particular in the poorer countries, means having minimal conditions that will enable them to make a livelihood, to have enough to feed their children and to educate them and to have a

reasonable standard of health, but it also means in industrialized societies also where of course pockets of poverty also exist, that where even people who have attained more than they probably need for their basic survival somehow don't find satisfaction in life. So it's a very complicated socio-economic problem which is going to need all our energies and all our imagination in the years to come in order to be able, I think, for civilization and humanity to survive.

WALD: Ms. Anstee, I want to thank you again for being with us on **WORLD CHRONICLE** because I understand that this may have been a very gruelling two weeks and you may be exhausted at this point. I was wondering if you have any kind of concluding remarks, any summing up of this experience and also, since it was somewhat controversial to have the venue in Cuba, what you think of your experience of the two weeks here?

ANSTEE: Well, the two weeks have been, in professional terms, I have learnt a great deal. They have been extremely stimulating. It has been gruelling as you have said but I think one of the things that has struck me most has been the atmosphere of tolerance, of mutual understanding even when opposite views were being expressed. The level of professional competence was extremely high. A large number of delegations were headed by ministers, and of course there were a great array of workshops and ancillary activities going on -- and I should have mentioned this earlier -- with a lot of participation by non-governmental organizations which is terribly important because the actions that follow up this Congress will depend not only on governments or on the U.N. Secretariat but on what is done at the community level and there are all these organizations which are so much more effective at that level. As for the venue of the Congress, I think that every delegation was absolutely sincere, not only in their public statements but

in what they said privately, about the absolutely superb arrangements that were made. The efficiency of the Cuban authorities was really quite exceptional in making a huge conference which had something like over one and a half thousand delegates, then this is a really big enterprise and apart from that the tremendous hospitality which we received. The openness and the friendliness of the Cuban people I think impressed many delegates. You say that this was a controversial choice, in fact it was a choice that was made in a democratic manner, in the General Assembly, through the proper procedures and adopted by a very large majority vote.

WALD: If we're not abusing your goodwill, part of the reason for that question is because the myth of Cuba has I think somewhat overextended the reality of Cuba and you've had that rare opportunity to actually see what may be a very controversial system. I was wondering if you took advantage along with the delegates to see how their criminal justice system functions and if you have any comments on it?

ANSTEE: Well, unfortunately I didn't have quite as many opportunities as the delegates for being able to leave the Congress hall but I did manage to escape one morning this week and went to see the women's prison and I must say that what I saw impressed me very much. I have been in prisons in other countries, including in developed countries. Of course it's terrible to be in prison, but the facilities that were there, there was a factory for the women to make clothes, to earn money, to receive a salary so that they could send money to their families so that they could save money and so forth. There were cultural pursuits, there was sports and so forth. The accommodation within all the limitations of prison accommodation was really I thought extremely good but I'm afraid my experience is a little bit limited but everything that I have

heard from other delegates who saw other prisons and perhaps had a wider view than I have, I think that many of them were quite surprised by what they found.

WALD: Thank you. I think this has been enlightening for all of us.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of **WORLD CHRONICLE.**

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